

FACT SHEET

Research from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency

The Nation's Most Punitive States for Women

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Rates, as opposed to prison and jail population numbers, allow for comparisons across time and across states with different total populations. In this Fact Sheet, except where noted, rates were calculated by dividing the custody or supervision population by the number of females in the general population and multiplying by 100,000.

The imprisonment of women across the United States has repercussions in every aspect of society, including the huge costs of incarceration at the local and state levels, the splitting of communities and families, the tragic disruption at crucial developmental stages in the lives of thousands of children, and the unchecked deterioration of the physical and mental health of women in prison.

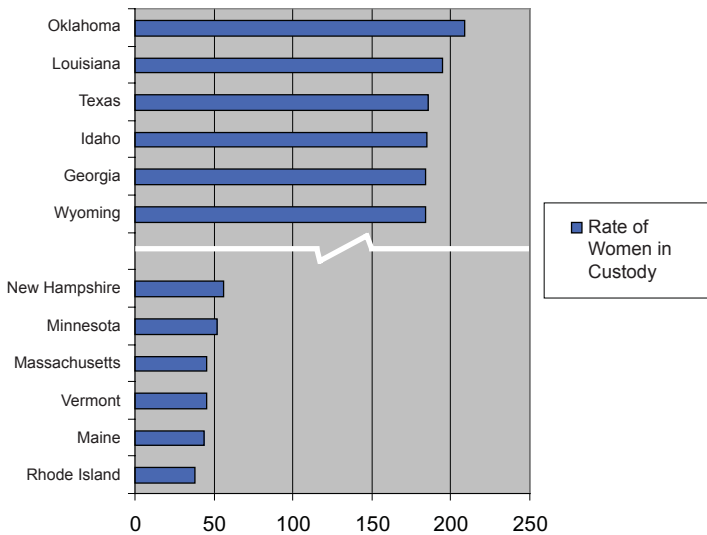
While the U.S. as a whole leads the world in its punitive response to crime for women as well as men, it is important to consider variations among the states.

This Fact Sheet reports the latest state and national data available for women and girls involved in local and state corrections systems across the nation. Rates per 100,000 females in the general population are reported to compare and contrast each state's response to crime. Raw numbers are also reported when available. The information presented here will be useful in discussions about underlying causes of crime, justice policy, and correctional practice.

*Rates of Women Held in State Prison or Local Jails, June 30, 2005**

Women Held in State Prison or Local Jails

Based on 2005 rates of incarceration in state prison or jail, the most punitive U.S. states for women were Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas, Idaho, Georgia, and Wyoming. The states with the lowest rates of incarceration were Rhode Island, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New Hampshire.



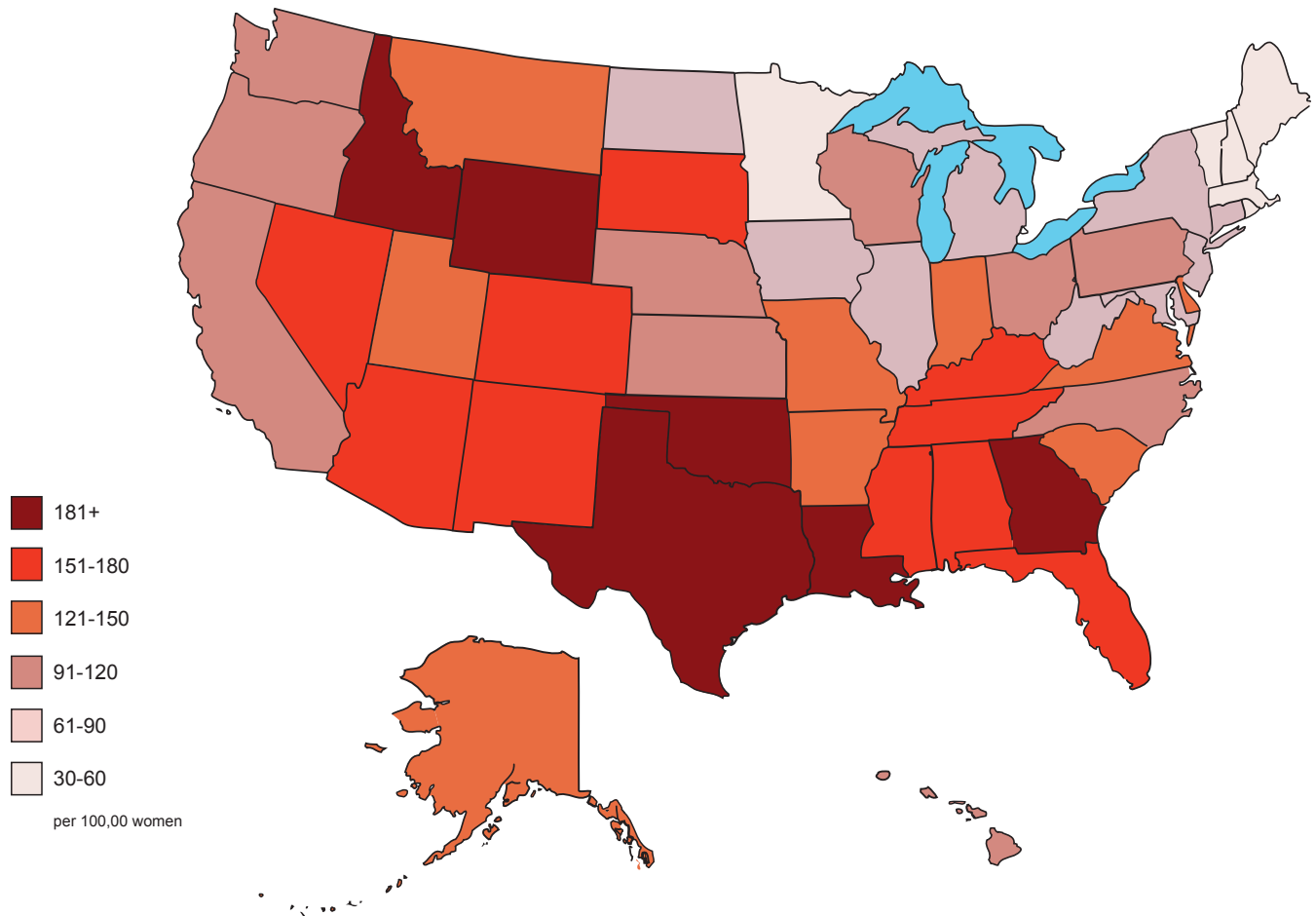
Illinois and New York each have relatively high numbers of incarcerated women yet have some of the lowest rates of incarceration.

*Figures may include prisoners under the jurisdiction of the federal prison system but held in state prisons or local jails. The Federal Bureau of Prisons had under its jurisdiction 12,422 women in 2005 at a rate of 8 women per 100,000 in the U.S. population.

**District of Columbia figures include only jail inmates. State prisoners in the District of Columbia are held in the federal system.

Rank	State	Inmates	Rate
1	Oklahoma	3,750	209
2	Louisiana	4,535	195
3	Texas	21,344	186
4	Idaho	1,321	185
5	Georgia	8,438	184
6	Wyoming	464	184
7	Kentucky	3,673	173
8	Nevada	2,047	173
9	Arizona	5,081	171
10	Mississippi	2,528	168
11	Colorado	3,849	166
12	New Mexico	1,599	163
13	Alabama	3,769	161
14	South Dakota	612	157
15	Florida	14,094	155
16	Tennessee	4,613	151
17	District of Columbia**	422	145
18	Virginia	5,530	144
19	Alaska	453	141
20	South Carolina	2,997	137
21	Arkansas	1,921	136
22	Missouri	3,953	133
23	Montana	603	129
24	Delaware	552	128
25	Utah	1,563	127
26	Indiana	4,005	126
27	California	21,601	119
28	Kansas	1,610	117
29	Hawaii	700	109
30	Wisconsin	3,000	107
31	North Carolina	4,596	104
32	Ohio	6,042	103
33	Washington	3,168	101
34	Oregon	1,844	101
35	Nebraska	830	93
36	Pennsylvania	5,877	92
37	Maryland	2,545	88
38	North Dakota	278	87
39	Michigan	4,365	85
40	Connecticut	1,541	85
41	West Virginia	784	84
42	Iowa	1,248	83
43	Illinois	5,109	79
44	New Jersey	3,111	70
45	New York	5,618	57
46	New Hampshire	371	56
47	Minnesota	1,334	52
48	Massachusetts	1,496	45
49	Vermont	141	45
50	Maine	295	44
51	Rhode Island	212	38
ALL STATES		181,435	121

*Rates of Women Held in State Prison or Local Jails,
June 30, 2005*



Source: Harrison & Beck (May, 2006).

Corrections Expenditures, 2004

In the year 2004, the states with the highest per capita expenditures on corrections per person in the general population were the District of Columbia (\$295), Alaska (\$271), California (\$265), Wyoming (\$260), and New York (\$248). The states with the lowest per capita expenditures were North Dakota (\$93), New Hampshire (\$100), South Dakota (\$105), Iowa (\$110), and West Virginia (\$118).

California had by far the greatest total annual corrections expenditures of any U.S. state at \$5.6 billion, followed by Texas (\$3 billion; \$180 per capita), New York (\$2.6 billion), Florida (\$2.2 billion; \$204 per capita), and Michigan (\$1.6 billion; \$207 per capita). The total across all states was \$39.3 billion (\$192 per capita).

(Hughes, 2006.)

Almost one-third of all female prisoners in the U.S. were held in three states.

In 2005, California held 21,601 women in prison and jail, Texas 21,344, and Florida 14,094. The states with the next largest female incarcerated population were Georgia (8,438), Ohio (6,042), Pennsylvania (5,877), and New York (5,618).

The states with the smallest female incarcerated population were Vermont (141), Rhode Island (212), North Dakota (278), and Maine (295). (Harrison & Beck, May, 2006.)

Arrest Rates Do Not Explain Differences in Custody Rates.

The fact that each state arrests different numbers of women does not explain differences in incarceration rates. If it did, the number of women in custody per 1,000 women arrested would be approximately the same for every state. In fact, that rate ranges from 23 in Rhode Island and in Maine, 33 in Minnesota, and 35 in Nebraska to 89 in Texas, 93 in Ohio, and 109 in Georgia. Differences in punitiveness are more likely explained by the laws, policies, and practices—and the beliefs and attitudes of elected officials and the public—influencing each state's response to crime.*

**Arrests are used here as a proxy for crime; reported offenses cannot be distinguished by gender.*

(Estimates use 2004 arrest data from FBI, 2006, and FBI, 2005; incarceration data is from Harrison & Beck, May, 2006).

Women are sentenced for fewer violent offenses and more drug offenses than men.

Across the U.S. in 2005, of the women serving sentences of more than a year, 35% had a violent offense as their most serious offense, 30% a property offense, 29% a drug offense and 6% a public order or other offense. Men had 53% violent offenses, 20% property offenses, 19% drug offenses, and 8% public order or other offenses. (Harrison & Beck, November, 2006.)

The U.S. incarcerates more women than any other country.

The U.S. incarcerates the most women of any nation—183,400 in 2005. The U.S. rate of incarceration of women per 100,000 in the population is 123 (including federal prisons), compared to 88 in Thailand, 73 in Russia, 17 in England and Wales, and 3 in India. When one compares the number of incarcerated women in individual states to the number of incarcerated women in the nations of the world, Texas ranks 4th and California 7th.

(See Walmsley, 2006, and Hartney, 2006.)

The number of female prisoners is rising in proportion to male prisoners.

Women made up 6.1% of the total imprisoned population in 1995 and 7.0% in 2005.

Between 1995 and 2005, the number of women in prison increased an average of 4.6% per year, while the number of men in prison increased annually by 3% in the same period. The states with the greatest average annual increase in imprisoned women since 1995 were North Dakota (18.2%), Montana (14.1%), West Virginia (14.0%), Maine (13.6%), Utah (13.5%), and Vermont (13.2%). The only state with a decrease in that period was New York (-2.5%). (Harrison & Beck, November, 2006.)

Incarcerating women often separates children from their primary caregiver.

An estimated 1.6 million children have mothers under some form of correctional supervision including 294,000 children whose mothers are incarcerated in state prison or local jail. More children have fathers incarcerated than mothers. However, unlike imprisoned fathers, most mothers are the primary caregivers for their children and will return to their homes after imprisonment, so the mother's incarceration usually has a more significant impact on the life of the child.

(Mumola, 2000; Glaze & Bonzcar, 2006; and Harrison & Beck, May, 2006.)

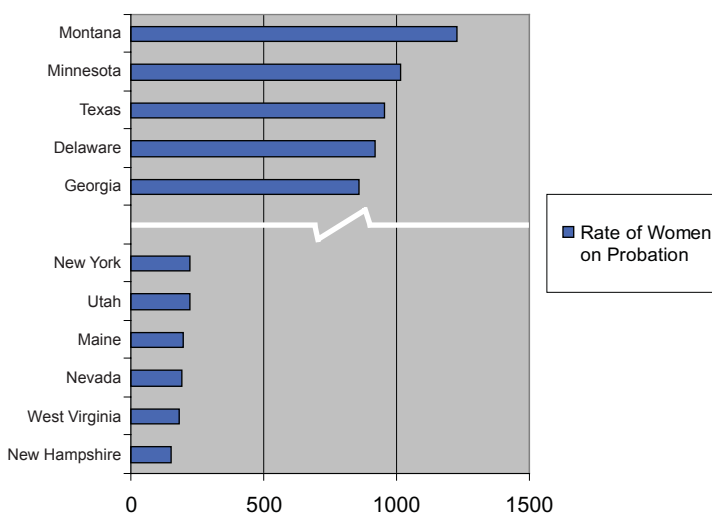
State	Probation Rate	State	Parole Rate
Montana	1225	Pennsylvania	219
Minnesota	1016	Oregon	148
Texas	953	Arkansas	140
Delaware	917	District of Columbia	131
Georgia	857	South Dakota	110
Massachusetts	852	Louisiana	103
Indiana	810	Texas	93
Rhode Island	722	Missouri	84
New Jersey	669	California	66
Vermont	650	Vermont	60
Connecticut	647	Illinois	59
Pennsylvania	618	Wisconsin	56
Hawaii	614	Georgia	54
Arkansas	598	Colorado	50
North Carolina	591	Idaho	49
Colorado	579	Kentucky	46
Florida	556	Hawaii	45
Oregon	543	Washington	44
Nebraska	539	New Mexico	43
Michigan	518	Oklahoma	43
Illinois	515	Wyoming	42
Ohio	512	Iowa	39
Wyoming	507	Maryland	39
District of Columbia	490	New York	37
Idaho	474	Tennessee	36
Arizona	471	Michigan	35
Maryland	470	Nevada	35
Missouri	454	Utah	35
Wisconsin	447	Alabama	34
California	445	Arizona	29
Kentucky	422	Montana	29
Washington	407	Kansas	27
Iowa	404	West Virginia	27
Oklahoma	393	Virginia	25
Louisiana	391	New Jersey	24
New Mexico	384	Indiana	23
Alaska	372	New Hampshire	23
Mississippi	365	Ohio	23
Tennessee	364	Alaska	21
South Dakota	361*	Mississippi	21
South Carolina	349	North Dakota	21
North Dakota	335	South Carolina	16
Alabama	332	Minnesota	12
Kansas	270	Connecticut	10
Virginia	258	Delaware	10
New York	222	Massachusetts	10
Utah	220	Nebraska	10
Maine	198	Rhode Island	5
Nevada	191	North Carolina	4
West Virginia	181	Florida	3
New Hampshire	151	Maine	0
ALL STATES	512	ALL STATES	52

Rates of Adult Women on Probation and Parole, 2005

Women on Probation and Parole

The states with the highest rates of women on probation in 2005 were Montana (1,225), Minnesota (1,016), Texas (953), Delaware (917), and Georgia (857). The states with the lowest rates of women on probation were New Hampshire (151), West Virginia (181), Nevada (191), Maine (198), Utah (220), and New York (222).

The states with the highest rates of women on parole were Pennsylvania (219), Oregon (148), Arkansas (140), District of Columbia (131), and South Dakota (110). The states with lowest rates of women on parole were Maine (0—Maine stopped using parole in 1975), Florida (3), North Carolina (4), Rhode Island (5), and several states with 10. (Glaze & Bonzcar, 2006.)



*Only total (male and female combined) figures were available for California, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, South Dakota and West Virginia. The female parole or probation population was estimated for those states based on the female percentage of total arrests (FBI, 2006).

Rank	State [†]	Count	Rate
1	Wyoming	141	497
2	South Dakota	129	289
3	Nebraska	216	220
4	Indiana	714	201
5	North Dakota	63	186
6	Florida	1527	172
7	Nevada	189	152
8	Alabama	357	144
9	District of Columbia	30	132
10	Iowa	207	131
11	Utah	189	125
12	Louisiana*	300	113
13	Arizona	339	105
14	South Carolina	243	105
15	Kansas*	159	103
16	California	2139	102
17	Idaho	84	102
18	West Virginia	87	97
19	Montana	48	94
20	Oklahoma	180	93
21	Michigan*	525	90
22	New York**	903	88
23	Virginia	342	85
24	Delaware	36	83
25	Alaska	36	82
26	Ohio	522	82
27	Oregon	153	79
28	Minnesota	222	77
29	Arkansas	114	76
30	Georgia	369	74
31	Texas	972	73
32	Pennsylvania	483	72
33	Colorado	177	70
34	Wisconsin*	216	70
35	Connecticut**	132	69
36	New Mexico	72	63
37	Washington	213	62
38	Mississippi	102	60
39	Missouri**	192	60
40	Kentucky	126	58
41	Hawaii	33	51
42	Tennessee	156	50
43	New Hampshire*	36	48
44	North Carolina**	219	48
45	Massachusetts*	150	45
46	Rhode Island	24	43
47	Illinois*	300	42
48	Maine	24	34
49	New Jersey	162	34
50	Maryland	96	30
51	Vermont	6	18
	ALL STATES	14,454	88

Number and Rates of Juvenile Girls in Custody October 22, 2003

Juvenile Girls in Custody

Based on 2003 rates of custody (detained or committed) per 100,000 females under 18 years of age in the general population, the most punitive U.S. states for girls were Wyoming (497), South Dakota (289), Nebraska (220), Indiana (201), North Dakota (186), and Florida (172). The least punitive states were Vermont (18), Maryland (30), New Jersey (34), Maine (34), Illinois (42), and Rhode Island.

The proportion of girls to boys in custody has been rising, with girls representing 13% of all juveniles in custody in 1991 and 15% in 2003.

The number of girls under 18 years of age held as adults in state prisons fell from 175 in 2000 to 91 in 2005, a 48% decrease. The number of boys under 18 also fell in that time period, from 3,721 to 2,175 or 42%.

Girls are in custody for different offenses than boys.

Although proportions vary by state, across the U.S., 87% of girls in custody were there for delinquency offenses (30% person, 21% property, 7% drug, 8% public order) versus 96% of boys (35% person, 29% property, 8% drug, 10% public order).

Girls in custody in 2003 were much more likely to be status offenders than boys, with 13% of girls versus 4% of boys in custody for status offenses.

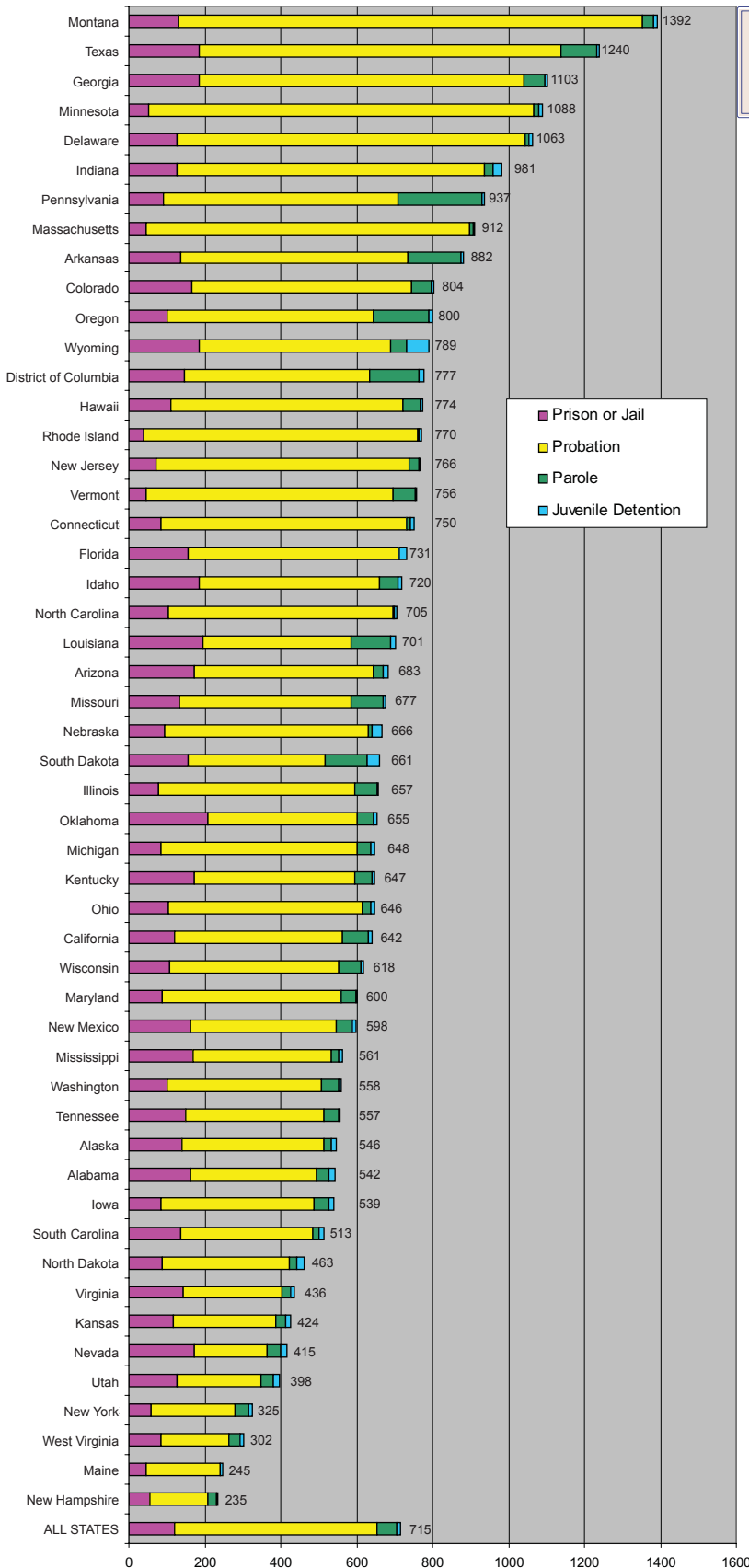
Similarly, 20% of girls versus 14% of boys were in custody for a technical violation of probation.

Delinquency offenses are those for which an adult could be prosecuted while status offenses are those specific to juveniles such as truancy, curfew violations, running away from home, or alcohol possession or use.

[†]Except where noted, upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 17.

*Upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 16.

**Upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 15.



*Total Control Rates in Local and State Corrections: Imprisoned or Jailed, Probation, Parole, and Juvenile Custody**

Total Control

The states with the highest total rate of involvement in the corrections system (total control), including women and girls both incarcerated and under supervision**, are not always the same states with the highest rate of incarceration, since states rely in varying degrees on probation and parole as a response to criminal activity. Montana, Texas, Georgia, Minnesota, and Delaware were the states with highest rates of total control, while New Hampshire, Maine, West Virginia, New York, and Utah had the lowest.

Minority women are disproportionately incarcerated.

In 2005, the national rate of women sentenced (per 100,000 in the general population) was 88 for Whites, 144 for Hispanics, and 347 for African Americans.

(Harrison & Beck, May, 2006.)

*For purposes of calculating the total control rate, juvenile custody rates represented in this table were based on each state's total female population, not the total juvenile female population.

**Figures for juvenile girls under supervision were not available, so total control rates are underestimated.

Sources: Harrison & Beck (May, 2006), Glaze & Bonzcar (2006), Sickmund, Sladky, & Kang (2005).

Summary

The women in U.S. jails and prisons are chronically overlooked. Their histories, their needs, and the impact of their imprisonment are largely invisible to U.S. society. However, their numbers, at almost 200,000, are significant and growing, as are the numbers of children's lives affected by how we treat women offenders.

This Fact Sheet sheds some light on the dilemma of women prisoners in each of the 50 states and points to discrepancies among state policies and practices. Much of what to do about women prisoners is outlined in the excellent, groundbreaking work on gender-responsive treatment for women by Drs. Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, and Stephanie Covington (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003).

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